**Persephone Will Have Her Fill**

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/29166561.

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|---|---|
| Rating: | Explicit |
| Archive Warning: | Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings |
| Category: | M/M |
| Fandom: | Hannibal (TV) |
| Relationship: | Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter |
| Characters: | Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter |
| Additional Tags: | Alternate Universe, Alternate Universe - Different First Meeting, Will Graham is a Cannibal, Established Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham Has Encephalitis, Dark Will Graham, Serial Killer Will Graham, Top Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter is a Cannibal, POV Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter |
| Language: | English |
| Series: | Part 2 of Beautiful Monsters |
| Stats: | Published: 2021-02-03 Words: 9,341 Chapters: 1/1 |

# Persephone Will Have Her Fill

by nobetterlove


Summary

After meeting the mysterious darkness that is Will Graham, Hannibal finds himself snared by the presence he brings into his life. When a question sparks up the need to truly be seen, Hannibal sets out to do just that. Earth-rocking realizations ensue.


Notes

Hey guys!

It feels like a wrote and rewrote some of this a billion times. Will's POV was easy, but the delicacy that is Hannibal is much, much harder. Either way, I'm finally happy with it, so I hope you enjoy!

(I listened to Caught by Florence + The Machine religiously while writing this part - give it a listen while you read if you're so inclined).

See the end of the work for more notes

“Have I ever seen any of your work?”

Looking up from the cutting board in front of him, the chef’s knife in his hand stalled through the rough chop he was treating the cilantro to. Hannibal took a second to draw in breath, then tilted his head – a contemplative look on his face.

“I’m surprised you haven’t pieced it all together already,” Hannibal replied smoothly, his body shifting to turn in Will’s direction. For a second, Hannibal let himself soak the other man in. His hands were covered in blood from the preparation of the organ on the butcher block in the middle of Hannibal’s kitchen. The man’s latest acquisition sat there, a heart that would make great steaks for their dinner that evening, and then a lovely addition to a stew that blew Hannibal’s mind the last time Will shared it with him.

There were so many hidden components to Will Graham that Hannibal still didn’t completely grasp, but this one, the element that brought freedom and dropped the masks – Will flourished in it. The pinch of his shoulders eased and the fluid motion of hand to knife created art; a sort of relaxed talent that Hannibal only ever knew of himself before the whirlwind of Will swept into his life.

And, while they didn’t indulge the other in shared secrets of recipes and know-how in the kitchen, they each brought their own pieces to the game and let the innate connection between them bring about the result. The last few months of collaboration were some of Hannibal’s greatest culinary triumphs.

A coy smile directed Hannibal’s way brought him from his thoughts – the killer gleam in Will’s eyes reminding him of the existence of the wild animal the other man only barely kept at bay. He watched Will drop his knife, hands still covered in blood and viscera, and make his way directly into Hannibal’s space. There was a beat of shared breath, and then Will was suddenly behind him – his arm wrapping around Hannibal’s upper arms, pulling him until they were flush together, back to chest.

A blood stain in the shape of Will’s hand on the bicep of Hannibal’s shirt contrasted the stark white of the fabric – Will’s mark on him tangible in that moment in more ways than one.

The slightest height difference between them made it easy for Will to hook his chin over Hannibal’s shoulder, his lips already pressed delicately against the sensitive shell of his ear.

“I’ve thought about your design since the second I met you,” Will muttered, the words kissed into the soft skin just below Hannibal’s ear. “You’ve been killing most of your life – probably started young, caught the bug and had the talent to back it up. You’re knowledgeable in anatomy, so your dissections are precise. You only take what you need and use the rest to send your message.”

Each word felt like a direct hit to the walls in Hannibal’s mind. The palace that existed there, while generally untouched by outsiders, called out to Will. From the day they met, Hannibal felt himself making expansions, rooms being added on in an attempt to fit Will Graham’s infiltration.

“What I can’t decide on, though,” Will continued, the hand not gripping Hannibal already drifting down svelte sides until it settled on the middle of a trim stomach, “is whether you make a grandiose display, or not. You already play with your food, but do you reconstruct it, too?” There was another shift, Will practically plastering himself to every part of Hannibal he could reach.

Hannibal, unable to resist the temptation of the delectable heat behind him, pressed back, his right hand reaching up to grab onto Will’s forearm. In this position, he could feel warm breaths against his neck and the gentle rise and fall of Will’s chest. Despite the topic of conversation, the rate of Will’s heart didn’t pick up – the lack of acceleration more thrilling than a flare of excitement would’ve been. Finding someone so similar to himself was disarming, and yet, Hannibal didn’t know what he might do without it now that he understood the taste. His palette was redefined, covered and shaped by his darkness and its interaction with Will’s.

“And now? After getting to know me – what do you see?” Hannibal questioned, his back pressing more firmly against Will’s chest. The thickness of Will’s erection was there against his back, heat and want adding to the odd intensity they found themselves in.

A nip to the neck tore a sigh from Hannibal’s throat, the answer to Will’s interest now smashed up against the zipper of his pants – the well-tailored suit slacks for once a nuisance, hindering his pleasure. Not usually so submissive, Hannibal fought against the urge to turn around and pin Will to the counter – these moments where Will shed the façade were few and far between. These interactions acted as gates opening to the empathetic mystery.

Will’s hand on his cheek had Hannibal turning his head, their lips joining in a warm kiss. He could feel the patches of Will’s hand that were still wet with blood – the liquid smearing wherever work-rough hands touched. The scent of copper and sweat were prominent in the space between them; an aphrodisiac if Hannibal ever knew one.

Tongues tangled in a desperate attempt to draw something from each other. When Will kissed, or touched, or even looked – the air went a little thin and every part of Hannibal was on display. Empathy or not, Will’s ability to look past the heavy walls and see within was unmatched and equal parts confusing and tranquil in its own right.

Parting for air became necessary – in their tussle to be as close as possible, Will pressed him hard against the counter. There was no space between their chests, no room to draw in a breath, even if he wanted to. Hannibal used his extra weight to lean forward, effectively cutting their kiss off. His chest heaved, and with every pulsing beat, Hannibal felt his cock throb – the timing of it eerily close to the pace of Will’s huffed out breaths.

Sure hands were quick to grab onto him again, Will used his leverage to turn Hannibal around – the two men practically nose to nose. The easy way Will stripped him down to this person that just did what was prompted, it was disarming and intoxicating all at once.

Those same hands were cupping his face then, Will’s thumb lightly running across Hannibal’s bottom lip. Will took his time looking Hannibal over, the tender brush of the man’s empathy caressing his skin. “I think you’re an artist, Hannibal. Sometimes you like the audience,” Will peppered kisses around the skin of his mouth as he spoke, “and sometimes, you keep your

brutality all to yourself. I'm willing to bet that several names in the media over the last few years apply to you."

"Such a clever boy you are, Will," Hannibal said in reply, both hands wrapping around Will's hips. "My most recent hunts have been underground, but one day – very soon, you'll truly see me." There was a soft breath shared, and then their lips were upon each other again.

It didn't take but a few steps to get down the hall and into the study – the idea of walking up the stairs completely out of the question. In their time together, Hannibal was quick to understand that the physical urge to own and connect would come whenever and wherever it wanted. Will carried chaos with him and used it to his advantage – his impulsive, yet completely strategic actions were off putting and wild – absolutely delicious in its juxtaposition. Each of the rooms in his house now stored lube in at least one of its drawers.

There was only so much expensive olive oil Hannibal could let go to the cause.

Hands fumbled to rid bodies of clothing while trying to keep the tension of lip on lip. Hannibal made quick work of Will's blue and green flannel; his fingers nimble on the buttons. A gasp left Will's lips when fingers made their first touch on bare skin – an entire army of gooseflesh overtaking the sensitive flesh.

By the time they made it into the study, Will's pants were hanging open, the belt flapping wildly with every movement. Hannibal, on the other hand, still wore his waistcoat and shirt, both of which were unbuttoned, yet hanging off his shoulders. His cock pressed ruthlessly against the seam of his dress pants, and every part of him ached to have Will in any way on offer.

Huffing out an exasperate breath, Will stepped back from their embrace. He made quick work of the clothes that still clung to him, his cock slapping his belly obscenely as the last layer fell to the ground. His eyes were ablaze, the usual blue of them completely overtaken by the lusty black that made Hannibal think of paranormal beings – beautiful little monsters with dark eyes and so many tricks under their sleeves.

"Have I told you how much I dislike all the layers you wear? While sexy, the suit takes so damn long to get off," Will grumbled, his tongue dragging over his bottom lip. "I'm not patient enough right now, either."

As he spoke, Will climbed onto the couch, his forearms settling against the armrest – the rest of his body a delicious temptation. Knowing how good he looked, Will glanced over his shoulder, a devilish glint in his eyes. He didn't need to say anything, either – he simply maintained eye contact and reached behind himself, deft, coppery red fingers prying his ass cheeks apart; the cherry pink of his hole on provocative display.

"Take it off, Hannibal – or don't. Just get over here and fuck me."

Unable to think any further than that request, Hannibal shrugged off his waistcoat and practically dove onto the couch behind Will. He let his eyes roam over every inch of Will he could before impatient hips pressed back against him. The string between divine and

desperate constantly hung in the balance – Hannibal frequently forgot the things he learned over the years; control and patience no longer existing.

Ducking between the delectable spread that was Will in that moment, Hannibal allowed himself to take in a long breath. The earthy musk sat in the back of his nose – his senses overcome with how manly and right the scent registered to be. It was a catalyst, the final notes of reign over himself falling as he tucked in and let the entire expanse of his tongue press against Will's most intimate spot.

Like a man starving, Hannibal set about claiming his prize. He started with small licks around the rim, Will's muscles already starting to relax under such simple ministrations. The first taste drove him mad with hunger, his tongue flattening after the first few teasing brushes to press more insistently against the still tight pucker. Pushing Will's hands away, Hannibal took over the job of spreading supple cheeks, his longer fingers pushed into the flesh. Wanting more width, Hannibal shifted, practically yanking the globes even further apart.

The pleasure-pain of it tore a growl from Will's lips, the man pressing his hips back against Hannibal's face roughly in retaliation. Though he could see the redness start to overtake skin, Hannibal continued on – he felt familiar enough with Will's interests to know that his counterpart appreciated the heat of pain just as much as delicate pleasure.

An abundance of spit both on Will's skin and around Hannibal's mouth and chin made the whole process easier – the point of his tongue and the tip of a rogue finger were easily admitted access. Little by little, Will loosened around him. Hannibal's ministrations, like the rest of him, were precise – dealt with the intention of taking Will to pieces. Yet, Hannibal felt like he was the one falling apart; every rough touch and drawn out moan felt like a hit straight to the soul.

No one – not even Mischa, laid Hannibal so bare to the world. Especially with something as simple as a well-placed look or cleverly worded demand.

Only Will.

Groaning at the thought, Hannibal pulled back, a hand coming up to wipe away some of the moisture from his face. His chest was heaving, the cardiovascular system within him used to heavy lifting, not marathon tongue fucking.

The small gap in movement and Hannibal's preoccupation was just enough for Will to once again take control of the situation. Where he was splayed against the side of the couch just moments before, Will was now facing Hannibal, his eyes alight.

Strong hands pushed against Hannibal's shoulders until his own back was resting against the opposite arm rest, his long legs stretched across the entire length of the couch. Will settled into his lap nicely – strong thighs bracketed Hannibal's, each clench and pulse of muscle bringing them closer, magnifying the feeling of touch and stimulus. Hannibal didn't even have his pants off, yet, he felt just inches from the delirious cusp of that little death.

Hannibal watched with a contained awe as Will reached for the end table drawer – his brain was so strung out, he completely forgot that lube existed there. The soft slam of it being

closed snapped him out of his haze. Hannibal tried to make quick work of getting his pants open – though, was quickly thwarted by Will, who merely let him get the zipper down before he was reaching in and grabbing Hannibal's cock without any sort of finesse.

Will impatiently opened the lube and poured a decent amount directly onto Hannibal's length – his teeth gritting against the cold of it. Fingers followed the flow. Will's hand wrapping around the girth of him brought sharp canines down into a kiss swollen lip – Hannibal never had to fight so hard with the quick to cum trigger reflex that attempted to fail him right that instant. Fingers were tight around him for too short a time; instead, they trailed from his swollen flesh and found their way to Will's hole, the man fingering himself open just enough to spread the slick.

Before Hannibal took his next breath, or had a second to find some control, Will lowered himself onto Hannibal's rigid cock – their joint pants of exertion sounding around the room, overtaking the entire space. In an attempt to stop himself from finishing right that very second, Hannibal gripped Will's hips tightly – his fingernails digging into the skin there, each one drawing up little welts of blood; Hannibal's mark visible now, too.

"Fuck, Will – don't move. Please," Hannibal mumbled, his forehead resting against Will's breastbone, his chest heaving with short, abortive breaths.

The slightest roll of hips was Hannibal's answer – Will adjusting their position to better fit his own comfort.

While more movement did not follow, the filthiest words did, instead. With his hands gripping either side of Hannibal's neck, Will used his leverage to tilt Hannibal's head up until they were looking eye to eye.

"You look good like this – completely undone. Your clothes are less than immaculate, there's wrinkles and sweat stains. Your pants are barely open and, in this moment, there's nothing that could get you to care any less about it. I wonder what you would say if you saw yourself – splayed open like the pigs we hunt, looking at me like I'm both judge and executioner. Do you think you would like what you saw?"

Biting down hard on his lip, Hannibal fought each second to keep their eye contact – the words were delicious, and so eerily on point. Nodding his head seemed to be the best course of action – words were failing him, his brain short circuiting one neuron at a time.

How did Will get to the very core of him? With all things considered, Hannibal constructed walls that no one else came close to touching, let alone blowing apart the way Will seemed to. It felt like losing himself in a way – giving up those pieces to be cared for by this beautiful monster of a man.

Sensing Hannibal's dilemma, Will started to move his hips in earnest. His rhythm a perfect distraction. There was a subtle roll down Hannibal's length, then a powerful drive up until only the tip occupied space. Up and down, over and over – Will drove him closer to a new kind of insanity. This one would take everything from him; mind, body, soul – even the heart that didn't seem to exist until the murderous temptation that Will embodied walked so easily into his life.

For a few exquisite minutes, Hannibal clenched Will's hips tightly in his hands while the man worked him over. At one point, Hannibal wondered if Will got off more on the power, than the actual physical closeness – but, a particular hard drive into the man's prostate made the answer obvious. Power over Hannibal drew him to madness. The power of Hannibal's body and the pleasure he could achieve from it – that gave him strength.

"Don't hold back anymore, Hannibal. I want you to own me," Will whispered against raw lips.

With the permission to do so, Hannibal surged up – their barely there kisses turning into something brutal as his grip tightened on Will's hips, his own finally breaking free of the self-induced confines to pound ruthless up and into the tightest heat ever experienced.

He felt wild and completely undone – his being only used to this adrenaline pumping feeling after the satisfaction of a hunt well done. It was crazy to be so unleashed, and yet, Hannibal let himself go, anyway; what Will wanted, he got.

When finality became something he could no longer hold back, Hannibal leaned forward and dug his teeth into Will's shoulder – his teeth marks from previous encounters still there, getting deeper and more defined by the bite. He clenched his jaw down and with the skin still between his teeth, came harder than ever before (which was saying something, because sex with Will was always an adventure). The rhythmic pulse and flutter around his length signaled Will's jump over the cliff edge with him.

Sticky cum in the space between their chests seemed pedestrian after such a connection. Physical representation of their joining didn't matter – the mental connection overwhelmed it all.

The come down a few minutes later consisted of blood in his mouth, long drawn in breaths, and the feeling of Will's palms on his cheeks. It felt like too much effort to fight anything from that point on, so he leaned back, his eyes catching Will's. Their shared look made his stomach clench – the overwhelming feeling of being taken apart more alive in that moment than their entire coupling.

"Will – " Hannibal tried to say, his voice so thick and scratchy from pulled out moans, new feelings, and heavy sighs.

Will's thumbs brushed chiseled cheekbones, the flat of his fingers settling on the edge of Hannibal's square jaw. "Shh," he said in reply, their lips joining for a surprisingly soft kiss. "I know – me too."

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After that night, something shifted. For so long, Hannibal conducted himself as a solitary creature – life was simpler when his plans consisted of his own wants and desires. Even after meeting Will initially, Hannibal figured things would stay separate – work, play, and the occasional murder taking up their own sphere in his life. The sudden realization that neither

he, nor Will, wanted any sort of separation, was monumental. In almost fifty years, Hannibal never saw something like this coming.

With the addition of Will in mind, Hannibal went about planning his next tableau. The Ripper hadn't made an appearance in a while and his sounders were due. Will understood what it meant to take someone's life – their shared desire to see the light in someone's eyes fade was apparent. And yet, Will chose to elevate his prey by making them into meals that anyone would drool over.

In his own experience, Hannibal appreciated the consumption of his victims because of the control it gave him – they weren't worthy of anything in life and as their flesh passed his lips, their sole source of meaning was to feed him, to nourish him – to provide the needed macro and micro nutrients that were essential to life.

Even still, The Ripper's message took things a step further. The elevation of murder into widespread art truly spoke of Hannibal's innermost feelings. Most people were beneath him and their only redeemable quality was their ability to be changed into priceless beauty. In his attempt to boost the lowest of low, Hannibal found himself – power of the hammer and all.

If anyone were to truly understand him and the tangible personification of his darkest and most intimate thoughts, Will Graham continuously proved he could be that person. With eyes that already saw so much, Will simply needed a nudge to truly see Hannibal – in every way.

Though completely terrifying, the thought brought about a new sort of excitement, too. To truly be seen and understood – Hannibal never even fathomed the occurrence. Living outside the confines of society came at a price, and no matter how many people graced his dinner table or laughed at his well-timed jokes, a divide between him and them existed. People turned a blind eye to what they didn't want to see – it was easier to ignore the things in front of them than genuinely accept inferiority.

Will, though – he gripped the chains of normalcy and broke them between his fingers. Still trying to piece together the extent of his empathy, Hannibal didn't quite know the complete depth of Will's ability to truly see. In the same breath, Hannibal swore that he could feel the intensity of the unique gift in everything Will did. While Hannibal wore a finely tailored person suit, Will used his ability to become the things people revered and those they feared whole heartedly – so simply, with just the roll of his shoulders and a long, deep breath.

The Ripper deserved the right audience and finally, after so much time of not knowing how much he truly wanted the echoing applause, Hannibal found someone worthy of it.

Planning such a grandiose thing took time. For weeks, Hannibal went about everything as usual. On the nights that Will cooked late, Hannibal made the trip out to Wolf Trapp – his Bentley eating up the miles with relative ease. Winston, who took a liking to Hannibal immediately (he was sure the freshly made sausage had a lot to do with that), expected play time and pets before Hannibal could even think about joining Will in the kitchen.

The weekends, however, those belonged to Hannibal. Unless otherwise occupied with a last-minute client, Will spent both days in the glorious confines of Hannibal's fancy brick and mortar. Most of that time, admittedly, was spent in the kitchen – Will's passion for food (and

not just that of the human variety) kept things interesting. There was always a new knife technique to try or a rare ingredient to add to the mundane. When they weren't cooking away, or eating their weight in their creations, both men simply existed together.

Will let Hannibal sketch him in whatever way requested, and in return, Hannibal brushed his fingers through Will's hair as he perused cookbooks and academic articles. A give and take existed that shouldn't – not between two very peculiar men who took to murdering others as a hobby. And yet, Will kissed him goodbye when Hannibal mentioned something about hunting on his way out the door. Picture perfect domestic bliss.

One particular weekend a few months after falling into such a routine, Hannibal convinced Will to join him at the opera. After weeks of preparation and recognizance, he finally felt ready to reveal his most coveted persona to the man that quickly became the most important part of Hannibal's existence. Why not make a night of it?

As usual, they made dinner together – Will's latest victim's kidney made for a delicious steak and kidney pie. The crust was buttery and flaky, rolled thin to perfection. When it came out of the oven, Will preened at the proud look on Hannibal's face.

"Looks amazing, Chef," Hannibal complimented, his fingers already twitching to scoop a fork into the molten confines of golden pastry.

Will continued to beam as the table was set and Hannibal, in all of his unselfish glory, handed over the serving spoon. Despite being the one to take the lead on most of their meals, Will gave the dishing out honor to Hannibal – even at his own table. There was a power dynamic that existed, and each man understood their role.

Will sent him a genuinely intrigued look, his eyebrow lifting. Instead of questioning, however, he simply gripped the utensil and went about portioning out their meal.

They made small talk throughout the devouring of their joint efforts – Hannibal spoke of his latest client's swiftly developing obsession with him and watched delightedly as Will grew more menacing by the second. Franklyn never stood a chance, but the opportunity to push at Will's boundaries wasn't something he wanted to pass up. Jealousy, though such a base emotion, could lead a person astray very quickly. For the first time, Hannibal wanted the tenacity and rage that came with the juggling act. Someone he craved wanted him just as much and would fight tooth and nail to keep it that way.

And though not entirely thrilled to be amongst the masses in a "penguin suit", Will cleaned up nicely – the tailored tuxedo was midnight black, enhanced with a single, dark pinstripe down the side of each pant leg. He finished the look with a stark white shirt and black bow tie – elegant and simple, yet dangerous at the same time.

Finishing up his own look, Hannibal retreated from his walk-in to find Will casually seated on the edge of the bed. Merely lounging there, he looked absolutely exquisite.

His eyes were closed and for a moment, Hannibal wondered if he were asleep sitting up. He cleared his throat in an attempt to rouse Will, his long legs carrying him until there was only a couple of inches separating them.

Blue eyes blinked open slowly, a faraway look overtaking Will's face before finally registered Hannibal's presence.

"Are you feeling alright?" Hannibal asked, concern heavy in his voice. He reached to press a hand to Will's forehead and found the skin there warm, the slightest bit of moisture sitting just barely on the surface. All tell-tale signs of an oncoming fever.

Reaching up to grab Hannibal's hand and lacing their fingers together tightly, Will attempted a smile – the man's mask not as secure as usual.

"I'm fine – just a bit of a headache. I haven't been sleeping very well the last few nights, so it's probably just some fatigue." While he spoke, Will got up from the bed, his persona shifting with a soft roll of his shoulders. Now cognizant, the process came easily. His eyes were already a little clearer and any sort of weakness that existed in seconds before, was completely gone. Will Graham, the unsuspecting chef, Hannibal's partner, stood in front of him once more.

"Are you finally ready?" Will asked, an eyebrow quirking.

Shaking the worry off, Hannibal grinned at the cheeky question. In their time together, certain habits made themselves known. Will drooled when in deep sleep and didn't always pick up his wet towels. And while completely put together outside of the walls of his room, Hannibal was fussy and took a lot of time to get ready – the construction of his person suit more time consuming and labor intensive than Will's would ever be.

"Snarky thing," Hannibal immediately remarked. He pressed forward to press a chaste kiss to Will's forehead. "Let's go, darling. I have something for you after the show and am suddenly impatient to gift it."

Will's simple nod brought a brief surge of panic to his chest, but he quickly brushed it off. Though not the reaction he thought he'd get, the line of sweat still painting Will's brow reminded him of the blurriness he encountered just moments before.

Leaning in again, Hannibal tucked his nose into Will's neck and took a deep breath. Apart from the normal smells of bergamot, vanilla, and the slightest bit of wet dog, Hannibal scented something warm and sweet – the rising fever in the other's skin taking on the body of over-ripened fruit.

He was met with the same intrigued look from their time at the dinner table when he pulled back. In an instant, Hannibal suddenly realized that was Will's way of expressing his curiousness. Will usually pieced together the situation before it happened and reacted accordingly. Most people broadcasted their thoughts and feelings unconsciously, and Will's intelligence made it easy to fill in the blanks. Hannibal, however, kept things locked tight – meticulous thought and effort went into making sure people received the exact message he wanted them to.

Though completely disarming himself, Will found a peculiar sort of mystery in Hannibal – the appeal of the unknown one of the things Hannibal could easily tell attracted Will to him

so holistically. Like the true predator he was, Will enjoyed the chase. One that they both knew would probably never dull with the lifestyle they both kept.

The realization made his heart drum rapidly; love never took on a definition before, but in that moment, Hannibal finally understood. How interesting the realization came barreling towards him so out of the blue, yet so naturally. Like companionship – love didn't ever seem like an option.

A soft touch on his cheek brought Hannibal back to the room – he blinked quickly, smiling to cover up the absentmindedness. The same curious look was on Will's face, eyes never leaving Hannibal's.

"Are you okay?" Will asked, his other hand pressing against Hannibal's chest. "We might be late if we don't go soon."

That was all Hannibal needed to get back into gear – they made quick work of getting into jackets and climbing into the car. Hannibal held the door open for Will and before he could sit down, pressed a kiss to his lips.

"You don't have to butter me up – I'm already in the tux." The words came out of his mouth, yet Will couldn't hide the blush on his cheeks or the duck of his head.

The drive over was uneventful – there wasn't any talking, but the soft tones of Mozart kept the atmosphere calm and serene. Will's hand landed on Hannibal's thigh halfway to the venue – Hannibal dragged his bottom lip between his teeth to stop the megawatt smile from overtaking his face. Instead, he wrapped Will's hand up with his own, their fingers tangling effortlessly.

Out of all the reasons why Hannibal donated to the arts, the preferred parking had to be one of the best among them. He pulled into his designated space a while later and shot will a playful wink.

Will snorted, his head shaking – "pretentious prick."

They arrived just in time to schmooze for a few minutes before having to take their seats – a fact that Hannibal was over the moon about. Through months of dating, he never got the opportunity to show Will off. Aside from the fact that the man shone with impressive energy, Hannibal selfishly wanted everyone to see who he managed to attract; a very special man came into his life and despite it all, chose to stand proudly by his side.

With a soft kiss to Will's cheek, Hannibal gestured to the bar. "I'm going to grab us a drink. I'd like to introduce you to a few people, if you're not opposed."

"I don't mind – you've been dying to show me off for ages. I'm surprised you were able to wait this long," Will retorted, a look of absolute knowing on his face. He casually slipped his hands into his pockets, the needed mask for the occasion slipping into place. "You know where to find me."

Turning, Hannibal glided easily to the bar, ordering the same vintage chardonnay he always did and a whiskey neat for Will. The bartender recognized him immediately, the gold membership card that sat in his breast pocket unneeded.

“I’ll put it on your tab, Doctor Lecter.”

“Thank you, Tyler. It’s a pleasure, as always.” He saluted the younger man with the drinks in his hand and set off to find Will.

Without even having to try, Will drew people to him. The ever-curious Mrs. Ellen Komeda stood proudly in front of his beau, her eyes cataloguing him sharply. In a lot of ways, the two of them were very similar. Where Ellen lacked the empathy, she made up for it in pure grit and tenacity. She could read a room because she knew just about everyone and everything in it. Someone like Will, a gorgeous outsider, more than likely called to her from the moment she saw him.

“Where have you been hiding this one, Hannibal? He’s an absolute delight,” Ellen remarked the second he was within conversing distance. She eyed him up, then nodded approvingly.

Handing Will his drink, Hannibal let his now free hand wrap around Will’s waist. A moment existed where he thought Will might tense up, but he simply leaned in closer – the doting boyfriend act both natural and highly manipulative. What a delightful boy.

“We’re both busy men. Will here is the mastermind behind that delectable pate from my last dinner party.” The pride he felt carried over in his voice – people knew how Hannibal felt about food; the compliment held a lot of weight.

From the surprise on Ellen’s face, she too understood the sentiment.

“That’s high praise indeed. When I didn’t see you still wrapped in your apron when I arrived, I should have figured something was up.” She turned to Will then, her smile challenging. “Tell me Will, how did you charm the good doctor so?”

Seemingly unable to stop himself, Will chuckled, then pressed himself closer to Hannibal. “I bumped into him in a gourmet cheese shop. My refined palette was the major selling point.”

Before anyone else could say anything, a gentleman making his way into their little group stopped the conversation in its tracks. Hannibal watched Will’s eyes flash, the other man’s arm tightening around him. It was a minute reaction but telling all the same. He pulled at the seams of his person suit, the edges tightening up imperceptibly.

Luckily, Ellen saved them all, her social graces without fail. “Mr. Bowerman, it’s been some time since I last saw you at the opera.” Her mouth quirked as she spoke, like the words were bent nails in her mouth.

“Yes, well – since my wife’s passing, getting out to these fancy shindigs isn’t nearly as fun.” He took a long sip of his drink, his eyes shifting to Hannibal, only to linger on Will a second later.

“Walter Bowerman,” the man announced. The words were spoken into the open nothingness of the air, but his eyes – they were glued to Will.

A rush of murderous rage ran down Hannibal’s spine, his nostrils flaring.

Will didn’t miss a beat though, the brilliant boy he was. Tossing back his drink, Will waved the empty glass at the newcomer, a neutral look on his face. “Walter.” The single word was dismissive, only to be aided with a subtle turn of his body. He flashed a smile at Mrs. Komeda next, his expression softening slightly. “Ellen, it was glorious to meet you. Have Hannibal pass on my information – I’d love to cook for you some time.”

Understanding without any further prompting, Hannibal bid them both an absent goodbye and let himself be led by Will. He watched blue eyes track down a waiter, where he deposited his glass before continuing towards the theater door.

There wasn’t a sound made until they were alone in Hannibal’s booth – Will’s face was sweaty again, eyes slightly hazy. “Is it common knowledge that Walter Bowerman killed his wife?” Will asked lightly, breaking the silence. He swiped at his brow, looking a little off kilter.

Thrown off by the bluntness of Will’s words, Hannibal tuned out everything but the question. A sliver of pride sat in his chest at the other’s deductive abilities – Hannibal instantly knew there was something off but wasn’t able to pinpoint exactly what. Will’s mind – it was a beautiful thing.

“Tonight happened to be the first time I’ve made his acquaintance – Ellen seemed put off, but I think the interruption to our conversation played a big part in that. You are very charming,” Hannibal admitted easily. Even he had been impressed.

“He got pleasure from mentioning his wife’s death. There was that murderous glint in his eye that just felt – wrong.” He moved to continue, but the stage lights flickered, and the heavy curtain started to pull back.

For a while, previous interactions fled from Hannibal’s mind – the mind-numbing drift a welcome gift after the stress of the evening. He let Will take his hand before the aria started, the touch the only anchor he wanted to the present. After a beat, the soprano opened her mouth and started to sing. Merely relaxing back, Hannibal let the music wash over him.

About halfway through the first act, a tightening grip on his hand brought Hannibal out of his mind space, a confused look on his face for a split second before it was quickly replaced by worry. Will’s face was covered in sweat and his chest seemed to be heaving, despite the dwindling awareness. He looked at Hannibal helplessly, mouth opening around unspoken pleas.

Finally, Will managed to grab ahold of himself for a second – his words a little slurred when he babbled out – “I think there’s something wrong.”

Acting quickly, Hannibal jumped out of his seat, suddenly glad for the privacy of his usual booth. Getting up wouldn’t disturb anyone, so there was room to get Will out however he

needed. The man was cognizant enough to help Hannibal pull him out of the chair, but that only went as far as the hallway outside of their seats before Will went limp. The seizure that followed so nicely allowed Hannibal to get Will to the bathroom, the convulsions starting the second he got them pressed against the solid surface of the door.

His hands cupped Will's cheeks, the grip of them strong to keep the back of his head from smacking against anything. Will's eyes were open, but the pupils were completely blown – there was no focus or constriction whatsoever. Holding Will as tightly as possible, Hannibal rode out the storm.

When the shaking stopped, Hannibal counted out five minutes before Will came back around – his once slack body clenched all at once, fear and confusion flowing through him. "H-Hannibal?" Will chocked out, the syllables running together.

Bringing his face up to do a quick check of blue eyes, Hannibal let out a breath. There was finally some response in the dark pupils. He ran his thumbs softly over the apple of Will's cheeks, maroon eyes roaming everywhere at once. "Are you with me, Will? You just had a seizure and you're burning up. Can you hear me?"

"Hannibal?" Will questioned again, his chest heaving once more.

Unable to stop himself, Hannibal leaned forward and pressed a quick kiss to Will's cheek – the contact just as much for him as it was for the confused man in his arms; an earth-shattering need for comfort overwhelming. They needed to get out of there while Will was still upright and conscious. The increased heart rate and continued confusion meant there wasn't much time left to do that.

Instead of forcing Will to respond anymore, Hannibal got them into a position where he could take most of Will's weight – thankfully, Will was with it enough to walk with the help. The lobby was empty – an absence of sound appropriate to the situation at hand.

Being in the heart of downtown made getting to a hospital quick and easy. Every couple of minutes, Hannibal reached across the middle console to check on Will, his heart slamming into his chest in the scant seconds between touching and feeling the rise and fall of his chest. Though the seizures didn't return, Will's consciousness diminished with each passing second.

The Bentley skidded to a stop outside the emergency room doors, Hannibal hopping out in a fit of adrenaline – he threw open Will's door to pick him up bridal style. There was a second where their eyes met, a brief connection before Will slumped into him, his fight with whatever was burning him up coming to a swift end.

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It took two days for Will to completely regain consciousness.

Throughout those two days, Hannibal worried incessantly, sat by Will's bedside, and didn't think once about the tableau he set up that was probably discovered by the authorities, already.

Being so thorough in his work, Hannibal didn't use a sing brain byte to dwell on it – there wasn't any evidence. There never was.

After carrying Will into the ER in the most dramatic fashion as possible, the hustle and bustle of brain scans and medication deployment took up all the space in Hannibal's mind. In the bouts of time that Will got swept away, Hannibal went home to shower and change; once, he made the trip out to Wolf Trapp to get Winston and clear out the remainder of Will's fridge. No matter what happened, a hospital stay was in Will's future. The least Hannibal could do was take care of his dog and make the already harvested meat into delicacies to be eaten when Will felt better.

Despite trying to keep busy with arrangements and appointment reschedules, the minutes between Will's decent into unconsciousness and his waking were long and torturous. The encephalitis diagnosis made a lot of sense after thinking about Will's behavior over the last few weeks. The increase of headaches and nightmares, a dwindling appetite, and large periods of losing track of time were all there pointing in brain swelling's direction.

It was pure luck that Will's body had such a severe reaction to the neurological change. If things were different, he might've dived very slowly into madness; both visual and auditory hallucinations were common symptoms of Will's particular brand of encephalitis. The spike of fever came at just the right time – the majority of his treatment would be minimally invasive and able to be given outside of the hospital.

The most confusing part of the whole situation was Hannibal's feelings towards it all. Of course, Will couldn't help the fact that he thwarted plans that were many months in the making. Yet, the anger he figured would sit under his skin, waiting to erupt, didn't exist. Instead, Hannibal felt the claws of worry drag along his back.

Every second that Will didn't wake up, Hannibal dipped a little further into unease. Going fifty years without the look in Will's eyes was one thing, but now that he knew – now that the feeling crept under his walls, there was no going back. How did he exist without the rambunctiousness and intelligence that accompanied the experience that was Will Graham?

His earlier thoughts about love came back to him with a not so delicate slam to the chest. The world felt like it was ending without the shine of Will's personality surrounding him because of the love he felt for the man. And what a thought – being in love with a soul so similar to his own. The match they made was perfect and for many reasons, shouldn't exist whatsoever. Yet, Hannibal could barely remember what life felt like without Will in it.

He didn't want to, either.

When Will eventually completely came to, Hannibal had his forehead pressed against their joined hands – his eyes closed in a desperate attempt to escape to the happier rooms in his mind palace. It was getting more difficult to filter everything out, so the halls were more cluttered than usual. The immense distraction almost made him miss the gentle squeeze to his hand – Will's fingers tightened around his own for the first time in more than fifty hours.

Sitting up, Hannibal didn't have a chance to stop the affectionate smile from slipping across his lips. His chest felt a little lighter – Will's eyes were the same shade of deep blue and

shining just as brightly as he remembered. The glassy nature of them was to be expected, the physiological expression of symptoms a reassurance that the body was actively fighting. After what seemed like years of waiting and worrying, Hannibal found comfort in all of Will's disarray, bed head and sleepy smiles included.

"Hannibal?" Will questioned softly, his voice hoarse and scratchy from being unused. Upon hearing it, Hannibal reached to press the nurse's button to get Will some water – they would want to know he was awake, anyway.

"Will – I'm so glad to see you," Hannibal admitted easily, his body ditching the chair to sit on the edge of Will's bed. He craved the length of Will pressed against him, any sort of familiar weight, really. Just the sign that the man was alive and with him was more than enough.

Reaching up to brush a curl from Will's forehead, Hannibal spoke up again. "It's been a couple of days since you last opened your eyes. How are you feeling?"

"Exhausted," Will mumbled immediately, his brows pinching together with every move as he adjusted. "You said two days? Did this happen at the opera? Hannibal, I'm – "

"Do not even begin to apologize, Will. Your brain was on fire – the last thing I'm worried about is a subpar rendition of Don Giovanni." There was a beat, then a subtle move forward to press lips to Will's still clammy skin. "I'm relieved you're going to be okay, Will. Everything else is moot."

There wasn't much talking after that – the exhaustion Will complained about took him under shortly after coming around. The nurses were able to document his stats and get a doctor in to see him before fatigue won out and Will became lost to sleep once again.

To occupy himself, Hannibal let his emotions run wild across the pages of his sketchpad. Despite being exhausted himself, sleep did not come. Memories and things yet to come crept through the halls of his mind – his hand manifesting them on the smooth paper at record breaking speed. With all of his energy drained, Will made the perfect model. Hannibal found himself able to get the man's lips right for the first time since he laid pencil to paper to personify the man. Drawing his partner in a much happier state of being made coping a little easier – the smile he could replicate brought a warmth that Hannibal couldn't admit he wanted with him at all times. Though, he so desperately did.

A hand on the top of his sketchbook brought him out of his artistic stupor. Hannibal moved quickly, sliding his fingers between Will's before the hand could retreat, or suddenly disappear like he feared. The skin there was warm, but not scalding like the days previous. When their eyes met, the blue depth of Will's seemed much clearer – like the rest was actually doing him some good.

"She looks like you," Will said, turning his attention back to the sketch pad he reached for initially. "Who is she?"

The feeling of being exposed washed over him for a second, Hannibal pulling in a deep breath in a desperate attempt to calm himself down. A Thursday in the middle of the night

wasn't how he figured his past would come to light – dark news needed an ideal setting. And yet, what better way to break down the last wall between them?

"This is Mischa, my sister. Even after all these years, I've never been able to do her true justice," Hannibal replied, his voice just steps away from melancholic. "She was this beautiful spirit – free and intense. Kind of like you, actually." A soft smile overtook his features, the truth of that statement ringing in his ears.

No wonder.

Will's hand tightened slightly, the fatigue keeping him weak in his touch. "Mischa – I like that. She's beautiful. You both have that little curl in your nose."

A laugh escaping Hannibal's mouth broke whatever tension remained – the depths of his chest finally clear. The days of worry and not-sleeping were catching up to him, and like it was so natural to do, Will cleaned the chaos up, his words sweeping out the cobwebs Hannibal let develop. Sucking in another long breath, Hannibal let that last bit of himself in hiding step out into the light.

There was another clear shift in the air between them then, the softness in Will's eyes something that didn't exist before that very moment. While so wrapped up in his own masks and Will's ability to see through them, Will was sneakily putting himself up for display, too. Breaking down walls brought about a gentleness that didn't befit ruthless murders, and yet – Will caressed Hannibal's hand softly, the touch for comfort's sake alone.

Without being prompted or asked, Will moved until a spot that maybe half of Hannibal could fit into appeared. Taking the offer for what it was, Hannibal dropped his sketch pad on the table, the pencil sitting lovingly over the cupid bow of Mischa's lip. He climbed in, the two of them rearranging limbs until Hannibal's arms were wrapped tightly around Will. It took a second to settle – then, sleep came quickly and kept them under for the rest of the night.

Will spent another two days in the hospital before Hannibal could convince the staff of his capabilities as a doctor. They were willing to release him after all of the intravenous drug administration was finished – the rest of Will's recovery would be based around rest and recuperation, anyway.

There wasn't any discussion about where Will would end up – the man simply climbed into Hannibal's car, curled up in the passenger seat with his head in Hannibal's lap, and slept on the trip back to Baltimore from the hospital. Hannibal made a quick trip home while Will sat in the MRI machine for the last time during his stay – both Winston and the kitchen were ready for Will's arrival.

It took Will most of his energy to get from the car to the door, but when Winston came jogging around the corner, a burst of joy sent him two steps forward until he could easily wrap the dog warmly in his arms. The whispered "I missed you" into the dog's fur more than making up for the hair on all the surfaces of the house.

When the reunion was over, Hannibal helped Will walk upstairs, the man already dead on his feet from just a couple of short encounters. That previously unnamed warmth took up space

in Hannibal's chest again – the overwhelming feeling of being so deliriously dedicated to another human being exhausting in its own right.

"I thought maybe you might like to take a bath," Hannibal said, his legs already carrying him towards the bathroom to start the water.

"Will you hold me, instead? I know I probably stink like hospital and it's killing that nose of yours, but all I really want to do is be in your arms."

Looking over his shoulder, Hannibal stopped in his tracks. There were no masks on Will's face; he was in the moment, so raw and open. The man who stood before him was stripped bare and asking for something – when he usually did nothing of the sort. The warmth bubbled a little bit more, the intensity of it growing with every passing exchange. He didn't need to think about what to do next – instead, he kicked off his shoes and went about turning the bed down.

Hannibal climbed in, reclining back against the nest of pillows. Though he figured he wouldn't sleep, Hannibal was more than willing to simply sit and catalogue Will a little more. The replica in his mind palace wasn't quite what he wanted, and the perusal of finer features was exactly what he needed to make the perfect rendering.

For a while, that's how things went – Hannibal kept Will against his chest until the call of food preparation took precedence. It usually took all of Will's energy to get downstairs to the table, so the first few meals were taken in bed.

Little by little, Will spent more time awake than asleep, the clarity of his thoughts returning as the days past. Surprisingly, the only thing that didn't return was the mask Will wore. Maybe it was the lack of energy, or maybe – after all was said and done, there was no need for them anymore. Seeing and being seen – it did something to a person. Especially ones like Will and Hannibal.

Then, a Saturday morning two weeks after his diagnosis, Hannibal woke to the feeling of Will's hands running down his chest and arms, nimble fingers pressing into skin, fingertips tracing and memorizing with every touch. Hannibal kept himself still, letting Will have whatever he wanted before the realization of having an audience occurred.

The rise and fall of Will's chest sped up a little, his body heat rising for a much better reason than the earlier fever that ravaged him. Without meaning to, Hannibal shifted back into it – giving himself away in an instant.

"I know you're awake," Will mumbled against his spot on Hannibal's neck, hips pressing forward ever so lightly.

Rolling over, Hannibal used the quick movement to pull Will under him, their bodies lining up from head to toe. Will's legs opened just enough to allow Hannibal access to gap, the length of them wrapping around Hannibal's hips in the next instant. There was a clench of muscle, then no space between them at all.

“I see you’re awake, too,” Hannibal whispered, his hips pressing down – erections grinding together with the barest of touches. “Are you feeling better?”

Hips pressing up for a longer drag of cock on cock was his only answer. Unable to ignore the call, Hannibal moved against him, the friction building there absolutely exquisite. They shifted and moved until their lips met and the oxygen in the room steadfastly escaped. Every pull of breath in was more of Will – more of his scent, more of his presence – more.

Though neither made any move to takes thing further along, Hannibal could feel the intimacy building up between them. It wasn’t so much about the heat of the physical, this particular moment more than just a sexual connection. Where Hannibal pulled, Will pushed – their hearts beating in tandem.

A crescendo didn’t carry them away – instead, a sort of peace overtook the room. The feeling so foreign that they looked and touched just to make sure the other existed – that after everything, the other was there and the affection that zinged between them wasn’t one sided. Two psychopaths falling in love was never on the top of anyone’s love story list, yet – it happened without either of them knowing.

When Hannibal pulled back this time, those frightening words on the tip of his tongue, he let them fall effortlessly from his lips.

Brushing his nose against Will’s, Hannibal stayed close, the words “I love you” leaving his chest and sitting in the air. It felt odd and for half a second, he thought Will might not feel that way about him after all. The two, three, four beats of his heart before any sort of response were agonizing, both too short and much too long.

Those warm hands were there, though, Will’s palms cupping his cheeks and fingers digging into the longer hair around his temples. Their eyes met, maroon holding blue – and the worry melted away. No mask, after seeing past it, could hide the devotion existing in the ceaseless pools of gorgeous blue.

“I love you too, Hannibal.”

End Notes

Thanks for sticking around, y'all! Fluff, despite my attempt to not include it, seeped its way in anyway - I hope you guys don't mind!

Up next in this verse - A certain Mr. Bowerman comes back into the picture and our boys finally find out what it's like to enjoy their hobby with someone else.

If you're interested in following my writing journey, hop over to tumblr (I'm ohwereusingourmadeupnames over there).

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